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Texas rural roads are the deadliest in the nation, new report says

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By [Brooke Park](#), Reporter

Texas rural roads are the deadliest in the nation, [according to a report](#) by a national transportation research nonprofit.

The Lone Star State recorded 1,486 traffic fatalities on rural, non-interstate roads in 2022, according to a report by [TRIP](#), a private organization that researches transportation issues nationwide. California, whose rural roads are the second deadliest in the nation, saw 1,030 deaths, the recently published report shows.

While Texas saw the highest number of rural traffic deaths, rural roads across the nation need attention to increase safety. The U.S. owes all its rural roads \$145 billion to fix a backlog of necessary repairs and improvements, the report says.

Another report compiled by the [AAA Foundation For Traffic Safety](#) in 2017 said a \$146 billion investment in the nation's roads could "save approximately 63,700 lives and reduce the number of serious injuries as a result of traffic crashes by approximately 350,000 over 20 years."

The U.S. owes all its rural roads, highways and bridges \$198 billion to fix a backlog of repairs and improvements, according to a report by a Washington, D.C.-based transportation research nonprofit. Texas rural roads are the deadliest in the nation, according to the recently published report.

Barry L. Harrell/Express-News Staff

The nation's rural transportation system, particularly its roads and bridges, faces significant challenges," the report states. "The rural transportation network carries increasing levels of traffic, fails to provide adequate connectivity for many communities, has significant deterioration and has significantly higher rates of traffic fatalities than other roads."

The rate of national traffic fatalities are almost two times higher on rural roads compared to any other road, a trend reflected in Texas' numbers as well.

"A disproportionate share of fatalities take place on rural roads compared to the amount of traffic they carry," the report states.

TRIP's report, which published this month, pointed to narrow lanes, higher speed limits, sharp curves and fatigued drivers as reasons for the higher traffic fatality rates on rural roads. The Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit broke down road improvements into low, medium and high-cost categories.

Low-cost improvements include adding rumble strips, which are grooved patterns that alert drivers when their wheels pass over them. If states add the strips to a roadway's shoulder, run-off-the-road crashes could be reduced by 25% to 43%.

States looking to make medium-level investments can focus on resurfacing pavements, which could reduce fatal crashes by 25%.

The most expensive improvements outlined in the report include widening shoulders, realigning roads and converting traditional intersections into roundabouts. Transforming an intersection with light signals into a roundabout can reduce injury crashes by 78%, the report says.